

January 12, 2007

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 1.16.07
HB 240

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of support for HB 240- Emergency Housing;

The YWCA of Billings Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services Program utilizes local motels for emergency lodging for victims of domestic and sexual violence. Providing this service has become increasingly difficult in recent years. While motel stays have been averaging between 5-10 times a year, the need is much greater. Funding necessitates stays of a week or less while awaiting a bed in the domestic violence shelter or assisting a client to seek shelter in another community. The safety of all women and children is of the utmost concern and would be easier to address if more resources were available. Reasons for utilizing motels include shelter for male victims, women with male children over the age of 15, above capacity at YWCA Gateway House and if staying at the shelter would be unsafe. An increase in available resources for emergency housing for victims of family violence is an important issue for all Montanans.

Sincerely,

Pamela Meyer Fletcher
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